

Lineout Calling & Defence Systems

Introduction

The lineout is a crucial part of any team's attacking game plan. Accordingly, when coaching, lineout calls and structures need to be efficient, adaptable and while necessarily sophisticated, they need to be reasonably straight forward to enable teams to coordinate themselves during high pressure situations.

Many of the current lineout calling systems are over complicated. In my view, if coaches can devise calls that are as short and simple as possible, they can also create more opportunities to incorporate variations to each lineout call.

This paper will deal with the importance of uncomplicated lineouts in attack, incorporating variations, taking the “three step” approach to allow variety and enhance lineout systems and defensive strategies to counteract the strengths and weakness of opposition.

Calling Systems

1) The “three step”

1st - a walk in option,

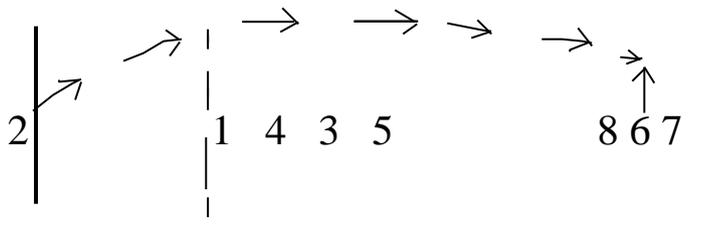
2nd - being simple call system (one word) eg. Colour.

3Rd - being your lineout calls eg numbers or letters.

A coach has to decide whether to have off the top service or down and pop or diving maul set up off it.

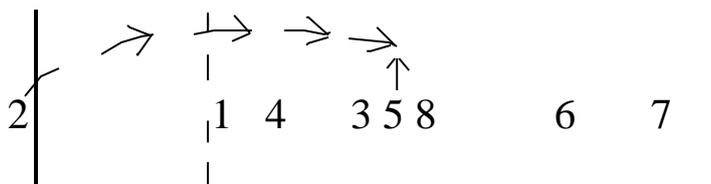
1st Option: A “*rolling in*” option should be available in every lineout formation. For example, a team's line out requires a walk in with a pod of 3 ready to go straight up on the jumper's call. This can be as simple as a nod or wave to the hooker, who then throws the ball and the pod proceeds straight into a lift so it is in effect, a “*throw and go*” lineout which is by far the hardest to defend. There is also the option to move this pod around in the lineout by having different names for different positions that the pod of three will be rolling in at. However, once the pod see that they are marked up by the defence, that pod calls “SET” which means control will go back to the lineout captain/ caller and the 2nd option in the lineout can be executed.

eg. Russia



This is a roll in set up and if 6 thinks that he is unmarked he will signal to the hooker to throw when he approaches and go up to meet the ball at the top of his leap.

eg. USA



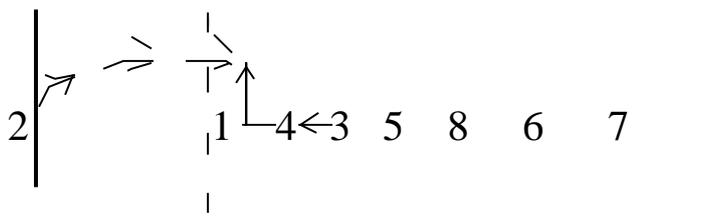
This is an other option, so 3, 5, 8 are the pod of three and if 5 thinks he is unmarked he signals to the hooker to throw. Then he meets the ball at the top of his leap.

2nd Option: Going to the one word calling system which can be as simple as calling a colour. A colour is allocated for the three main pods in the lineout being front, middle and back.

- eg. "Red" being the front ball.
- "Green" being the middle ball.
- "Orange" being the back ball.

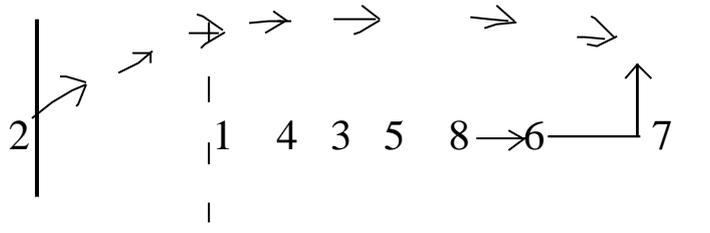
The lineout captain will simply call the colour of the pod that is unmarked in the lineout and the players react as quickly as possible to get that pod up and the ball in quick. This should result in an uncontested lineout because of the speed of it. If there are no clear, open options he will go into the full lineout calling system which might have decoys in it.

eg. Red



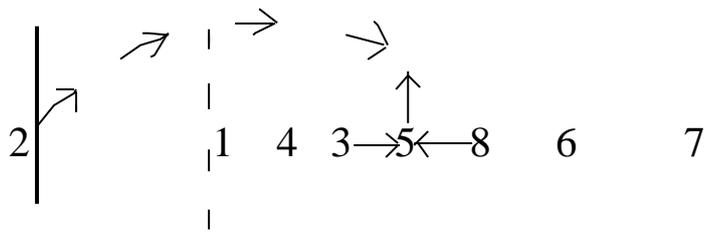
4 moves forward or to the space and goes up

eg. Orange



6 moves back to the space and goes up

eg. Green



5 goes to space in the middle and goes up

3rd Option: There are numerous different numbers and letter options to allocate to the lineouts. While these need to be easily remembered by the attacking team, if these are going to be used regularly, it is wise not to use a call that will be too obvious to the defending team. eg. The 2nd digit of the 2nd number in the call or have a word eg SHOP.

“S” being front ball.

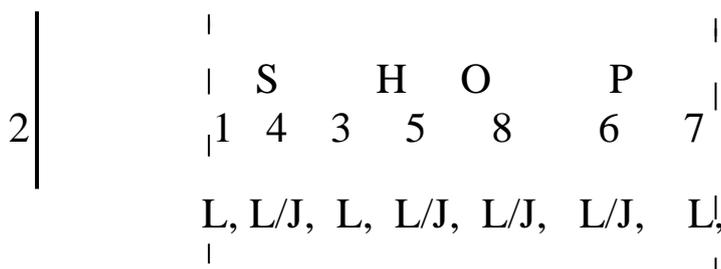
“H” being the 4 ball.

“O” being the 5 or 8 option depending on your jumper/ lifter options.

“P” being the 6 back options.

Key: L = Lift
L/J = Lift & Jumper

eg. SHOP



“F” Called before the position letter signals Forward movement.

“B” Called before the position letter signals Backward movement.

Just the letter means straight up.

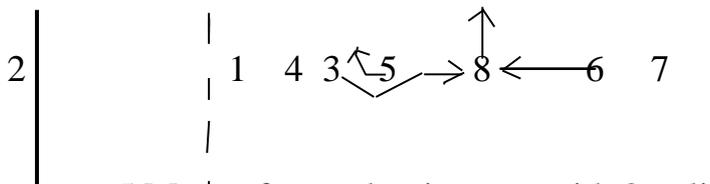
eg. FS 62 74 Means Forward @ S (front)

BH 32 51 Means Backwards @ H (No. 5pos.)

Once the team works that out, there is the option to add extra variations such as the following:

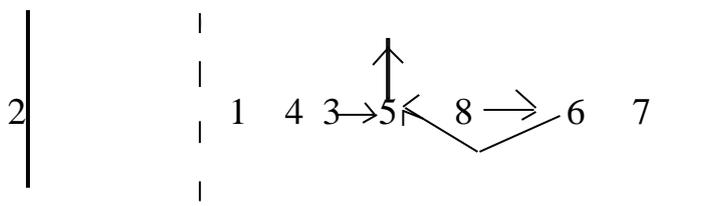
- Double number under 50 called at the start means a decoy forward and lifter fakes and goes around and lifts the next jumper
eg. 11, 22, 33, 44.
- Double number over 50 called at the start means a decoy backwards and the back lifter fakes to lift, then goes around and lift the next jumper in front
eg. 55, 66, 77, 88. 99.

eg. 22 H 17 37



5 Moves forward to jump at with 3 to lift, but fake and 3 goes around and lifts 8 in the space

eg. 77 O 17 37



8 comes back to lift 6, Fake and 6 goes around and lifts 5

Defensive Lineouts on Full Lineouts

In my view, the most effective defensive lineouts are devised on a week to week basis following close analysis of the opposition's usual or regular lineouts. This is obviously easier to complete if video footage is available and also if lineout players can play an active role in remembering and pre-empting calls.

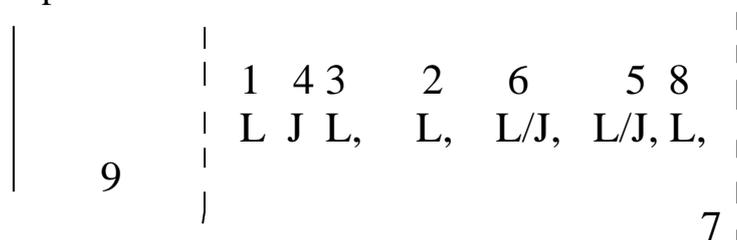
If a coach is not in a position to obtain and closely review video footage of the opposition, it is then important to in the first instance to identify the characteristic of the opposition's lineout. For example: 1: Strong lineout 2: Weak lineout 3: Strong ball runners off the back; and 4: Strong driving mauls off the lineout.

An effective defensive option is to always have the 9 in the hooker role so if his team wins an opposition's lineout, the 9 is there to deliver the ball to the backs. This also allows a team to put the hooker in the lineout to act as an extra lifter, swapping with the 7 which puts the 7 at the half back position, but at the back of the lineout near the 15 metre mark, which allows the 7 to shoot off the back of the line and put pressure on the opposition's fly half (10). This enables the backs to slide out one in defence.

1: Strong Lineout

The best option is to give up the front of the lineout, so therefore it will make it harder for the opposition to attack off the lineout if they happen to win. As the defensive team, it will make it easier to put pressure on the attacking team by getting off the back of the lineout and preventing the attacking team from crossing the advantage line and defending the next phase. This is as opposed to giving the opposition a quick ball at the back of the lineout which would then provide them with very easy possession off the back which is very easy to get over the advantage line, consequently making it harder to defend the 2nd and 3rd phases.

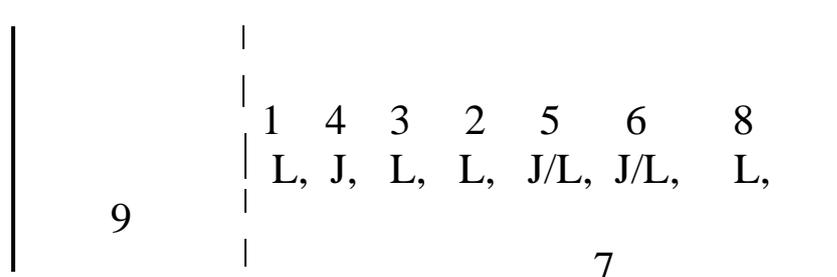
eg. Defence Set up.



4: Strong at the Driving Maul:

Firstly, it is necessary to decide whether to contest the lineout or just say down and try and sack and counter the driving maul. If the defence is not contesting, it is the best option to stay evenly spread along the lineout, so if the opposition do happen to win the lineout, the defence is not caught out with no player in front of where the attacking team is going to drive. Further to this, I would also bring the 7 remain at half back, but not stand at the 15m line, but stand in the middle of the lineout which would enable him to drive in on the opposition maul as soon as they hit the ground.

eg. Defence Set up



Conclusion

In summary, the above options are intended to highlight strategies for effective attack and defence in the lineout.

Attacking lineouts should be kept simple but be able to adapt quickly and easily to counteract the opposition's defence lineout

Defensive lineouts should be devised to put a lot of pressure on the opposition's attacking lineout and thrower, while still being mindful of allowing the rest of the defenders to be effective at the next phase.

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(1830 words)